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Cloudy

TODAY: Mostly cloudy and warmer; high in middle 40s.

FRIDAY: Showers likely; high in lower 50s.

'Mr. Average American' Voted For Nixon

The man who spent a week traveling with the campaign of Sen. George McGovern said yesterday he voted for Richard Nixon for president.

"I just don't think the man (McGovern) could have carried out the programs he had to offer in the way he would have wanted to," Richard Johnson said yesterday. Johnson was the Rolling Meadows man who was selected this year by the computers of the National Public Affairs Center for Television (NPACT) to appear in several television programs focusing on a representative of middle-class America.

"At first I was pro-Nixon," Johnson admitted, "but when the opportunity to travel with McGovern came up, I gladly accepted the chance. But the purpose was for me to hear and see what other people thought of McGovern."

(Johnson's memoirs of that trip were serialized last week exclusively in the Herald.)

"The thing that really bothered me was the indecision of the people around him," Johnson said. He said the indecision appeared in places like union groups, where after McGovern addressed a gathering people were not sure of their position toward the Democratic candidate.

Johnson said he didn't think McGovern could have carried through with some of the programs he offered the American people, even though Johnson said he agreed with many of the proposals.

"Like Vietnam," Johnson pointed out. "McGovern wanted to end the war and bring the troops home in 90 days, but I don't see how he could have done it. And on tax relief where he offered to provide another $22 million by closing tax loopholes, equalizing the tax burden and returning $15 million for local use. I don't see how that's possible in this age."

JOHNSON, WHO said "I'm really a Democrat at heart," expressed the thought that another candidate, notably Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.), might have been a more forceful candidate. In comparing McGovern to Kennedy, Johnson said "I don't want to say that Kennedy has more clout, but he has more power to get done what he wants to get done."

But in praising McGovern, Johnson added, "I wish some of the things that McGovern talked about, Nixon will follow through on."

Johnson conceded that the stigma attached to him by the media of being "Mr. Average American" caused some problems for him, especially as the election grew nearer "I really was undecided, but because of the position I was in, I didn't want one person to be swayed to Nixon just because I might be for him." He stressed the fact that Nixon was the better choice as far as Richard Johnson was concerned.

"At one point I was leaning toward McGovern when the peace rumors began," Johnson said, adding he thought the timing of the announcement of a possible peace might have been a politica move. But nothing ever developed fur

Richard Johnson

ther on the matter, so it did not beco an issue in his mind, he said.

ONLY TWO other Republicans v Johnson's support on Tuesday and t were Rep. Philip Crane and Sen. Char Percy. In all other racws, Johnson s he voted for Democratic candidates.

With the end of Campaign 72 came end, too, more or less, to Johnson's ti in the national limelight. But he adm he has had a year quite literally to member. "I never dreamed a year a that little me would be involved in this," he remarked.

And when asked if he thought he mig get invited to the inauguration in Jan ary, the man who was written about newspapers across the nation and feat ed on two television shows laughed a said "no I don't even think the Pre dent knows I voted for him."